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TELEVISION-AND THE INSTITUTION OF PHOTOGRAPHY OR PICTURE-MAKING

THE DEFINITION OF TELEVISION

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines television as follows:

“The electrical transmission of pictures in motion and the simultaneous electrical transmission of the accompanying sound.”

The Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary defines television as:

“Simultaneous visual reproduction of scenes, objects, performances, etc: vision of distant objects obtained thus.”

The Encyclopedia International explains television as:

“The unique feature that distinguishes television from radio is the conversion of an image into an electric current which is later reconverted to the original image.

“A picture ‘encoded’ in the form of a signal current is broad-cast by a radio transmitter, picked up by the receiver’s antenna, and routed to the television screen where the original scene becomes visible.”

THE WORKING OF TELEVISION

“The equipment consists of a camera which converts the image into electrical impulses; these are transmitted by radio to a receiver which converts the impulses by means of a cathode-ray tube into a corresponding image on a screen.”

THE IMAGE

“The illusion of motion in television is produced by showing 30 still pictures, or frames, each second. Through persistence of vision the brain retains each picture until the next comes along. We are not aware of the fact that our eyes are really seeing a rapidly changing sequence of a large number of slightly different still pictures. Each still picture consists of about 250 000 picture dots of varying brightness which appear as if painted on the screen. This process is called scanning.”

Zworykin’s Camera Tube

“The Russian-born American scientist made contributions that revolutionized television... Scanning was accomplished electronically both in

the camera-tube that observed the original scene and in the picture tube that reproduced the scene in the receiver. He called the camera tube an iconoscope (from Gr.Icon, 'image'; scope, 'to observe'). The screen that reproduced the image was called a kinescope (From Gr.Kine, 'motion').

"By 1936 television engineers had created a system capable of reproducing excellent pictures on an 8 by 19 in. screen. In the spring of 1939 television finally entered the field of public entertainment."

(ENCYCLOPEDIA INTERNATIONAL)

The Encyclopedia International Further explains:

Electronic Scanning

IN THE CAMERA. The concept of scanning can be illustrated by Zworykin's iconoscope, the first practical television camera tube. The heart of the iconoscope is a flat plate of insulating material. The plate is covered with a vast number of tiny droplets of a substance such as cesium-silver. The picture to be televised is focused on the mosaic of tiny droplets so that each droplet is associated with a particular picture dot, or small portion of the image.

The way in which the charge on the signal plate varies in the course of time is therefore a picture in code. This picture signal can be reversed at the receiving end to reproduce the original scene.

Although the iconoscope was an important technological achievement, it has now given way to the image orthicon for nearly all television broadcasting. The image orthicon is much more sensitive than its predecessor, and makes it possible to take better pictures with less illumination.

IN THE RECEIVER. Once the picture signal is produced in a television camera, it is broadcast much as though it were a voice current from a microphone. In order to reproduce the original picture, however, the signal must undergo special handling in the receiver. The original picture is reproduced in a cathode-ray, or picture tube, whose inner face is coated with a fluorescent material... Thus an image can be "painted" in fluorescent light over the face of the tube by a controlled beam of electrons.

In the scanning process each spot on the screen glows as if painted with electrons. The beam is deflected rapidly from left to right to reconstruct one line of the picture. It then jumps back rapidly to the left, dropping to a point slightly below the beginning of the first line. It moves from left to right once more, completing the second line of the picture. The process is repeated

many times until the lowest line is finished, after which the beam returns to the top left-hand corner of the screen to begin the next frame of the picture.

Colour Television

“In colour television three pictures are flashed on the television screen – one in each of the primary colours – and the result is a single picture in colour. A colour picture tube makes use of three different fluorescent materials which glow with red, green and blue light, respectively. The materials are painted on the screen in more than 600 000 tiny dots, divided equally among the three colours.”

Three separate electron guns are used... Each gun “paints” a picture in its own family of coloured dots, and the three pictures blend in the eye to make us believe we are viewing the colours in the original scene.

In practice the three images are separated in the camera by filters of the primary colours. Each image is converted into a picture signal and transmitted to the corresponding electron gun in the colour picture tube.

The colour images on the screen are true copies of the three images produced in the studio.”

The Encyclopedia Britannica states:

“... This fundamental disparity is overcome in television by a process of image analysis and synthesis, whereby the scene to be televised is first translated into an electrical image, and the latter is then broken up into an orderly sequence of electrical impulses which are sent over the channel one after the other. At the receiver the impulses are translated back into a corresponding sequence of lights and shadows and these are reassembled in their correct positions on the viewing screen.”

The Sunday Times TV Times and Colour Magazine says:

“Let us start with the TV camera. Your experience with cameras is probably limited to the one you have at home, which records the photographic image on film negative which after chemical treatment, is used to print a permanent picture on photographic paper.

“The point here is that the complete picture is instantaneously captured on the negative and the same picture is transmitted complete to the photographic paper.

“There is no way of sending a whole picture through the air in one piece. It has to be sent bit by bit by electric impulses. The best analogy for me to use is the black and white picture in a newspaper.

“... The TV camera follows the same principle. It sends out electric impulses which are picked up by the picture tube in your set.

“... More than a million dots are needed to cover your screen, and the process of scanning the 625 lines is repeated 25 times every second. So you get the impression of receiving a complete, moving picture instead of one that in fact builds itself down the face of your screen.”

The Encyclopedia Britannica further explains:

“This sequential reproduction of visual images is feasible only because the visual sense displays persistence; that is, the brain retains the impression of illumination for about 0.1 second after the source of light is removed from the eye. If, therefore, the process of image synthesis occurs within less than 0.1 second, the eye is unaware that the picture is being reassembled piecemeal, and the viewing screen appears as if its whole surface were continuously illuminated. By the same token, it is then possible to re-create more than ten complete pictures per second and to simulate thereby the motion of the scene so that it appears to be continuous.

“In practice, to depict rapid movement smoothly, it is customary to transmit from 25 to 30 complete pictures per second. To provide detail sufficient to accommodate a wide range of subject matter, it is customary to analyze each picture into 100 000 or more elementary details. This analysis implies that the rate at which these details are transmitted over the television system exceeds 2 000 000 details per second.”

“As already noted, in modern practice the televised image must be capable of being dissected, within a few hundredths of a second, into more than 100 000 picture elements. This implies that the electrical impulses corresponding to the picture elements must pass through the channel at a rate as high as several million per second.

“The first requirement to be met in image analysis is that the reproduced picture shall not flicker, since flicker induces severe optical fatigue.

“... A way round this difficulty (i.e. flickering) has been found, in motion pictures as well as in television, by projecting each picture twice.

“... In television, each image is analyzed and synthesized in two sets of spaced lines, one of which fits successively within the spaces of the other. Thus the picture area is illuminated twice during each complete picture transmission...”

“Actually, the screen possesses nearly 1 000 000 holes in an area of 1.5 sq. inch, compared with the roughly 200 000 picture elements into which the image is dissected.

“The stored charge image on the reverse side of the target is scanned by an electron beam...”

SUMMARY OF THE ABOVE DISCUSSION

1. The **PICTURE** to be televised is focused on the iconoscope which translates the **image** into an electrical signal.
2. The iconoscope has been replaced by the modern IMAGE ORTHICON which is much more sensitive than its predecessor and makes it possible to take better **PICTURES**.
3. The **PICTURE** signal is reversed at the receiving end to **REPRODUCE** the **original scene**.
4. The scene which appears on the television screen is a **PICTURE** of the **original scene** viewed by the TV camera. The scene on the TV screen is not the original scene, but a **DUPLICATE** of the original scene.
5. The TV camera converts the image into electrical impulses which are transmitted to a receiver. These electrical impulses are converted into an image which is projected onto the screen of the TV set.
6. The **reproduced image** corresponds to the original scene taken by the TV cameras.
7. Because the process of image synthesis occurs within less than 0.1 second the human eye cannot detect that the **PICTURE** (taken by the TV camera) is being **re-assembled** bit by bit.
8. Twenty-five to thirty complete **PICTURES** per second are transmitted over the TV system.
9. Each **PICTURE** consists of 100 000 or more electrical dots which are re-assembled after transmission to form the **PICTURE** on the screen.
10. The illusion of motion of the TV screen is caused by the swift and speedy transmission of large numbers of pictures, i.e. 25 to 30 complete pictures per second.
11. The TV screen possesses nearly 1 000 000 holes in an area of 1.5 sq. inches.
12. The impression of receiving a complete, moving picture is illusory. In fact, the **PICTURE** builds itself down the face of the TV screen.

It was necessary to present a technical discussion regarding certain aspects of the functioning of the television system in order to remove a misconception which exists in certain quarters. There are some among our brethren who contend that in “live” TV shows the principle of photography (which is one of the methods of picture-making) is not employed. This baseless contention is a consequence of total ignorance of the mechanics

and construction of the TV system. However, we hope that after perusal of the aforementioned discussion this misconception is dispelled, Insha'Allah.

It should at this juncture be said that the undesirability and the Islamic prohibition of this institution of television is not based solely on the stand that photography (picture-making) of animate objects is employed. Without minimizing the importance of the decisiveness of the prohibitory factor of picture-making it has to be said that a number of other evil and un-Islamic factors accompany the institution of television. It is this conglomeration of evil factors which make television illegal in Islam although, in most cases, each single one of these factors is sufficient to secure the verdict of illegality of TV. Insha'Allah, we shall outline these prohibitory factors or ASBAABUL HURMAT of television in the ensuing pages.

The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:
"Every picture-maker will be in Hell".

PICTURE-MAKING – THE MOTHER OF TELEVISION

In the technical discussion on TV it was shown that photography which is merely a method of picture-making is the actual basis of TV. Without the institution of photography television is not possible. Whether shows are "live" or otherwise, the institution of photography is employed. Now, according to the Law of Islam PICTURE-MAKING of animate objects is severely criticized and banned. In our booklet on PICTURES and PHOTOGRAPHY the Islamic ban on pictures of animate objects has been explained in detail. Since we have outlined the Islamic Law pertaining to photography or pictures of animate objects in a separate booklet, we shall content ourselves to mention here only the relevant Ahadith of our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم and his noble Companions (Radiallahu anhu) pertaining to the prohibition of pictures of animate objects.

1. Abu Talhah (Radiallahu anhu) reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "Angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or a picture". (SAHIHUL MUSLIM)
2. Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "The most grievous punishment on the Day of Resurrection will be for those who imitate Allah in the act of creation (i.e. making pictures and images)". (SAHIHUL MUSLIM)

3. Aisha (Radiallahu anha) said: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned from a journey and I had screened my door with a curtain having on it pictures of winged horses. He commanded me to remove it”. (SAHIHUL MUSLIM)
4. Aisha (Radiallahu anha) reported that she had bought a carpet which had picture on it. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw it, he remained outside and did not enter. I perceived signs of disgust on his face. She said: “O Messenger of Allah, I offer repentance to Allah and His Messenger – what is the sin which I have committed?” Thereupon Rasulallah ﷺ said: “What is this carpet?” She said: “I bought it for you so that you might sit on it and take rest”. Rasulallah ﷺ replied: “The owners of these pictures will be punished and they will be commanded to give life to what they tried to create”. He then said: “Angels do not enter the house in which there is a picture”. (SAHIHUL MUSLIM)
5. A person came to Ibn Abbas (Radiallahu anhu) and said: “I am a person who paints pictures, therefore give me a verdict about them”. Ibn Abbas (Radiallahu anhu) said: “Come near me”. He approached near, so much so that Ibn Abbas (Radiallahu anhu) placed his hand upon his head and said: “I shall narrate to you what I heard from Allah’s Messenger ﷺ. I heard him say: ‘All the makers of pictures will be in the fire of Hell. A soul will be breathed in every picture prepared by the picture-maker and it will torment him in the fire of Hell.’” Ibn Abbas (Radiallahu anhu) then said: “If you have to do it at all, then paint pictures of trees and lifeless objects”. (SAHIHUL MUSLIM)
6. Ibn Abbas (Radiallahu anhu) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ says: “Every picture-maker will be in the fire of Hell. A body will be created for every picture made by the picture-maker, and this body will torment him (the picture-maker) in Hell”. (MISHKAAT)
7. Abu Hurairah (Radiallahu anhu) reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Jibraeel came to me and said: ‘I came to you last night, but was prevented from entering because there were pictures at the door and a fine screen with pictures on it, and there was a dog in the house. Cut off the head of the picture so that it may resemble a tree. And, cut up the screen and convert it in to pillows. And, have the dog driven out of the house.’” (MISHKAAT – ABU DAWOOD, TIRMIZI)
8. Abu Hurairah (Radiallahu anhu) reported that Rasulallah ﷺ said: “A neck from Hell will emerge on the Day of Resurrection. It will have two eyes, two ears and a tongue. It will say: ‘I have been entrusted to torment three types of persons – every rebellious oppressor, everyone

who associated another in the worship of Allah, and the picture-makers’,”
(MISHKAAT – TIRMIZI)

9. Aisha (Radiallahu anha) reported that during an illness of Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم some of his wives spoke about a church which they had seen in Abyssinia. Ummi Salamah (Radiallahu anha) and Ummi Habibah (Radiallahu anha) had been to Abyssinia, and they were describing the pictures which they had seen there. Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم then raised his hand and said: “They (i.e. the Christians) are such people who, when a pious one among them dies, they build a place of worship over his grave and then draw pictures in it (the place of worship). They are the worst of the creation of Allah”. (MISHKAAT – BUKHARI, MUSLIM)
10. Ibn Abbas (Radiallahu anhu) reported that Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “The most grievous punishment on the Day of Qiyaamah will be meted out to one who killed a Prophet, who killed one of his parents, the picture-makers and a learned man who did not benefit by his knowledge”. (MISHKAAT – BAIHQI)
11. The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “Every picture-maker will be in the Fire”. (BUKHARI)

There are many more Ahadith of our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم which sternly and emphatically prohibit pictures of all living objects. However, we shall content ourselves with the abovementioned Ahadith as these are more than sufficient for all seekers of the Truth. These Ahadith are highly unambiguous and leave no doubt as to the attitude Islam takes with regard to this picture of idolatry and immorality – viz. picture-making, the root of all idolatry and evil.

Another point we have to stress here is the fact that ALL FOUR MAZHABS – Hanafi, Shaafi, Maaliki and Hambali – unanimously brand the practice of pictures PROHIBITED and the perpetrators as participants in KABIRAH (great) sin and as such they qualify for the epithet FAASIQ given by the Shariah to all rebellious sinners. It has been necessary to make this statement because there are many who hoodwink the unwary Muslim public criminally and cruelly by claiming that the practice of pictures is permissible in Islam. These are “the learned men” who have sold the Deen down the river. They have betrayed Allah Ta’ala; they have betrayed Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم and they have betrayed the sacred TRUST of SAFEGUARDING and DEFENDING the DEEN which accompanies the Trust of Islamic Knowledge.

MUSIC AND TELEVISION

We can consider music as an integral part of television programmes. No TV show is complete without music. Islam has forbidden music in no unmistakable terms. We have dealt with the subject of music with regard to the Shariah in a separate booklet, hence, it is not necessary to repeat the details of the subject in this booklet of TV. For the purposes of the present subject it will suffice to state that Islam categorically forbids all types of music. Music in Islam is regarded as a Kabirah (great) sin. With regard to music our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

“Music sows hypocrisy in the heart like water causes seeds to grow in soil.”

“Verily, Allah Ta’ala sent me as a mercy unto mankind, and a guide unto mankind. And, my Creator has commanded me with the destruction of musical instruments.”

“Among the Signs of the Final Hour are the abundant appearance of singing girls and musical instruments.”

“There will be men from among my Ummah who will consume alcohol, giving it another name (so as to deceive themselves and others). Singing girls and musical instruments will be playing to them. Allah Ta’ala will cause the earth to swallow them. Allah will transform them into apes and swines.”

The following verdicts are recorded in the Law Books of Islam:

“Musical instruments are HARAAM according to the unanimous opinion of the Fuqahaa (Jurists) of all the lands (of Islam).”

“The playing of musical instruments and listening to them are HARAAM.”

The Fuqahaa say that the verse of the Holy Quran,

“And among mankind are those who purchase futile talk so as to lead astray men..”

was revealed specifically to ban music and singing.

According to the Law of Islam one who participates in music is regarded as a FAASIQ, and as such, the Fuqahaa state that the evidence of such a person is not to be accepted.

And when they (the Believers) hear what is futile they turn away from it, and they say, unto us our deeds; and, unto you your deeds. Peace upon you. We do not allow the ignorant ones. (Quran)

NUDITY, IMMORALITY AND TELEVISION

The most glaring evil propagated by the television media of the world is the crime of nudity and sexual immorality. Commercialized nudity and sexual immorality under the camouflage of “educational” pictures are accepted and necessary features of world television. The Western world is haunted by the obsession of illicit sex, and it is this carnal obsession of illicit sex coupled with the unbeliever’s god of materialism which makes capital of the female body on TV as well as other mass media.

The Islamic concept of morality and modesty is the very antithesis of the immorality and lasciviousness dished out to the world via TV. Islam demands the concealment of the female body. Said the Holy Messenger of Allah ﷺ :

المرءة عورة

“Woman is an object of concealment”

(The subject of woman’s concealment referred to by Rasulullah ﷺ in the above-quoted Hadith is dealt with in a separate booklet entitled HIJAAB in ISLAM.)

But, TV is an institution which is widely used to exhibit the female body. Islam has banned all forms of immorality and immodesty, but TV exhibits immodesty and immorality in their crudest forms by depicting the actual sex acts and above all, it audaciously and shamelessly passes these off as “educational”. Television as a prime agent of immorality is very well borne out by the following reports:

Referring to nudity on TV in Holland, the Sunday Times of 25th August, 1974, states:

“TV shows of nudity are now almost as common as clogs and baggy trousers.”

“The series will probably shake South Africans if they were able to understand the extensive Dutch sex dictionary. Not only because every aspect of lovemaking is shown in detail – either live or in animated drawings – but because of the language used.”

The Evening Post dated 21st February, 1975, reports:

“In the film Dr. Christopher is seen holding up a contraceptive sheath and explaining its use to a class of boys and girls. Called ‘Sex and the 14-year-old’, the film concentrates on advising young people how to avoid pregnancy.”

ISLAM and Television

Evening Post, 26th August 1975:

“Bare breasts, long barred from family television screens in the United States are showing up on daytime and late-night TV in advertisements...”

Evening Post, 3rd July, 1974:

“The BBC said jokes with sexual overtones could help children later to cope more easily with cruder forms of humour...”

Under the caption, SEX FIMS ON TELEVISION GET M.P's APPROVAL, the Herald's London Correspondent writes:

“The radio programme is illustrated with brightly coloured paintings, which include full frontal nude pictures of a man and woman, the cut-away view of a child in a womb, and a couple having intercourse. The commentary explains how intercourse takes place and accompanies the illustrations.”

Eastern Province Herald, 8th December, 1969:

“The television programme also explains the fact of intercourse and shows a woman giving birth.”

Tomorrow's World, August, 1971:

“An almost unbelievable avalanche of sex, perversion, pornography, ‘blue’ films, sadism, masochism, bestiality, murder, rape and brutality, has flooded into the public view through the modern ‘boob tube’ of television, or movies and lurid novels.

“In British television, almost unbelievable references to lewdness, perverted sex and depravity are as open and unabashed as news reports.”

The above-quoted extracts will suffice to indicate the sordid mess and mass of unspeakable immorality portrayed by the TV. Leading non-Muslims too have voiced their concern and consternation over the evils and filth shown on the TV screen.

Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “Shamelessness (immodesty) is vice, and vice will be in the fire.”

TELEVISION AS AN AGENT OF ZINA (FORNICATION)

Allah Ta'ala says in the Holy Quran:

“And, come not near to zina.”

The terms, *“COME NOT NEAR”* means: Stay away from all such things and practices which lead to zina – which are stepping-stones to fornication.

All practices, things and institutions which aid and foster fornication and immodesty are forbidden by Islam. There are different categories of this abominable crime of Zina. Our Holy Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

العَيْنَانِ زَنَاها النَّظْرُ وَالْأَذْنَانِ زَنَاها السَّمْعُ وَاللِّسَانُ زَنَاها الْكَلَامُ وَإِلَيْهِ زَنَاها الْبَطْشُ وَالرَّجُلُ زَنَاها الْخَطْيُ وَالْقَلْبُ يَهْوَى وَيَتَمَنَّى وَيَصْدُقُ ذَلِكَ الْفَرْجُ وَيَكْذِبُهُ (مسلم)

“The zina of the eyes is the gaze (at that which is unlawful, e.g. nudity); the zina of the ears is to listen (to talks of nudity which excites the carnal desire); the zina of the tongue is to speak (what is evil); the zina of the hand is to touch (the female which is unlawful to you); the zina of the feet is to walk (towards immorality); the zina of the heart is to desire (what is unlawful), and it is the private part which either commits or shuns the actual act of fornication.”
(SAHIHUL MUSLIM)

In this Hadith the Holy Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم speaks of the zina committed by the various parts of the human body. Thus, to look at nudity and evil portrayed on the television screen constitutes the *zina of the eyes* as said by Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم:

العَيْنَانِ ذَنَاها النَّظْرُ

“The zina of the eyes is to look”

To listen to the immodest and illicit sex talks of the television is *zina of the ears*, as Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

الأَذْنَانِ زَنَاها السَّمْعُ

“The zina of the ears is to listen.”

Lust which is aroused by the display, discussion of nudity and lascivity and perversion on the TV screen constitutes the *zina of the heart* as our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

الْقَلْبُ يَهْوَى وَيَتَمَنَّى:

“The zina of the heart is to desire.”

ISLAM and Television

Television, therefore, is without any doubt a powerful agent and a stepping stone for fornication. In one Hadith our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم said: that among the signs of the Final Approaching Hour is that the whole family (father, mother and children) will collectively indulge in zina. Hazrat Maulana Yusuf Binnuri has interpreted this Hadith as a reference to this modern mother of immorality, the TV. We find today the whole family – father, mother, sons and daughters – sitting huddled together around the TV set viewing the obscenity and the nudity exhibited on the TV screen. Together, in a display of stark shamelessness, the whole family is committing zina of the eyes, zina of the ears and zina of the heart, and Allah alone knows how many multitudes of men and women indulged in the final act of fornication as a result of watching and being aroused by the evil on the TV screen. Ponder over the words of Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم and see the link in the following reports:

The Sunday Times of the 25th August, 1974, in a report captioned:

NO SEX HOLDS BARRED ON DUTCH TV, States:

“So it is intended for the whole family, children included. Entitled ‘Open en Bloot’ (Frank and Nude) the them is education and unveiled frankness.”

The evening Post, dated 21th February, 1975, in a report under the title:

TEENAGE SEX LESSON ON TV States:

“The programme was aimed at parents watching with their families.

“Called ‘Sex and the 14-year old’, the film concentrates on advising young people how to avoid pregnancy.”

Islam lays great emphasis on modesty, so much so, that our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

“Modesty is a part of Imaan (Faith).”

But TV with its emphasis on illicit, depraved and bestial immorality is the very negation of the Islamic concept of modesty and shame. Mother, father and children together viewing the zina – the fornication and vice on the TV screen – what is now left of humanity? May Allah Ta’ala protect us and our children from the filth and depravity of the Western world sunk in perversion and immorality.

“Today (the Day of Qiyaamah) we shall seal their mouths – and, their hands shall speak (the evil they committed); And their feet will bear evidence as to what they practiced.” (Quran)

TELEVISION AND CRIME IN GENERAL

Television, besides being a powerful agent of immorality, generally fosters various types of crime. Violence, aggression, robberies, murder, etc.. are crimes which the young readily learn from TV shows. Much of the delinquency and youth crimes being perpetrated in the Western world could be traced to the TV. In an article entitled: TV SHOWS BLAMED FOR CRIMES, Los Angeles Judge, Mark Brandler, blasted a TV crime show recently as the cause of a “seven hour nightmare” in which two teenagers taped shotguns to the heads of hostages and extracted huge ransom from a Californian bank

The Eastern Province Herald, dated 5th March 1975, in a report on the harmful effects of TV states:

“young people who mimic crimes seen on TV are showing up in increasing numbers.”

“On some evenings, with a little channel switching, viewers can watch as many as five cops and robbers show”

“On a recent Wednesday, in Los Angeles, for instance, one could keep company with murderer’s psychopaths, mobsters, kidnappers and bank robbers”

“The growing syndrome of public failure to respond – even by calling the police by telephone – to a victim’s cries for help is partially blamed by many researchers on TV.”

“.. But the TV crime wave goes on, and America’s crime rate continues to soar. More studies are under way, trying to determine how many, to what extent, and what kinds of children are effected and in what ways.”

TELEVISION ENCOURAGES ACCEPTANCE OF AGGRESSION

The regular and continuous shows of violence and aggression slowly, but most certainly, claim their victims. Viewers are “brain-washed” by the perpetual scenes of violence to such an extent that violence and aggressiveness becomes accepted as a mode of behavior.

“The effect of TV on a victim, if not perpetrator, has now been investigated by quite number of psychiatrists, sociologists and behavioral scientists and at the consensus of opinion is perhaps best summed up in the warning by Dr. Robert Liebert, a child psychologist who was a leading researcher in the United States Surgeon General’s

investigation into TV and social behavior: violence on home screens encourages ‘an acceptance of aggression as a mode of behaviour’,”
(EASTERN PROVINCE HERALD, 5th March, 1975)

TELEVISION ENCOURAGES IMITATION OF CRIME

Research has established that TV exercises a very strong influence on the minds of people causing them to imitate and enact the crime shown on the TV screen. The Eastern Province Herald reported:

“Not only may it stimulate an impressionable or disturbed individual into attempting to duplicate the crime, it also makes viewers insensitive to violence perpetrated by others.”

“Perfectly normal children.” Says Dr. Liebert, “will imitate anti-social behavior they see on television, not out of malice, but curiosity”

“In showing displays of violence and criminal acts, the media is ‘teaching’, people are ‘learning’, he says.”

(EASTERN PROVINCE HERALD, 5th March 1975)

The spiraling crime rate initiated and doctored by television is causing alarm among even non-Muslims. They have realized the moral, spiritual and human decadence and destruction which follow in the wake of TV, hence some men of authority are exploring avenues to protect society from the evils of TV.

“As a result of the fuss, the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) was ticked off by the House and Senate Appropriations committees and told to report on fresh measures to curb video violence or face ‘punitive action’..”

“FCC chairman Richard Wiley then approached the network chiefs and persuaded them to get to work on some specific plans to ‘protect children from excessive violence and obscenity.”

(EASTERN PROVINCE HERALD, 5th march, 1975)

THE BRAINWASHING ACTION OF TELEVISION

Researchers have established that the young minds of children are readily susceptible to being brainwashed by TV. In America organizations have been formed in scores of cities in order to fight the evil effect of TV on children. The President of the Organization, Action For children’s Television, a Boston-based parent’ organization with branches in 60 cities says:

“Our kids are being bombarded with so many messages per hour that they are being brainwashed.”

“At present, from Monday to Friday, children are subjected to 16 minutes of commercials an hour, and 12 minutes an hour on weekends.”

“Television advertisers in America are pouring unprecedented millions of dollars into the child slots for the autumn season, despite a storm of public indignation over ‘brainwashing’ on children’s shows.

TELEVISION STUNTS INTELLECTUAL GROWTH

An eminent American educationist Professor Lowell Little, claims that TV raises ignorant students. At an education seminar in Florida he said:

“Today’s youth are so used to plopping down in front of a television set and not having to put their brains to work that when they come to sit in the classroom of a university all they are capable of doing is day-dreaming and vacantly watching the clock.”

“It is a nationwide and possibly word-wide dilemma.

“As the first generation of youngsters all but raised on television has not reached college age it is abundantly clearer that the boob tube (i.e. television) has destroyed any curiosity they may ever have had.”

Professor Little said that there was no mistaking the malign influence of “idiot television”.

“People 25 or younger, have had a diet of television and it shows”, he said.

“When they talk it is so much immature drivel and they imitate the appalling grammar they hear on the tube.

“Their level of communication is just at the sixth grade level.

“Television has more influence on them than parents, teachers or clergy – and that is a disgrace.

“If I get through to four students out of 30 and arouse their interest that’s the best I can expect.”

THE ADDICTIVE INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION

The addictive influence of TV over its viewers is a serious malady which has reached alarming proportions. Viewers become so addicted to TV that it becomes most difficult for most viewers to live without TV. Research in this field of the “addictive influence of TV” has established that if those who are addicted to TV are deprived of television they become increasingly nervous,

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short-tempered and unhappy. In an article captioned: MILLIONS ADDICTED TO THE BOX, the Eastern Province Herald of the 23rd October, 1975, reports:

“Television has become the biggest leisure influence in many nations, with millions glued to the small screen every evening. Viewers have become addicted to it.”

Television’s addictive grip was emphasized some months before when three socially varied ‘guinea pig’ families agreed to try a switch-off for a month. The lowest income family could stand the deprivation only a week; the other two lasted for four weeks, hating every minute of it. They said they felt as if they had lost a friend, were depressed and thought their work was suffering too.

“In an earlier psychological experiment 182 West Germans volunteered to try to give up television for a year, with the inducement of payment as long as they kept off. One brave family stood the strain for nearly six months – till they wanted to watch a crime serial. The first volunteer, a bachelor, failed after three weeks. Others became increasingly nervous, short-tempered and unhappy. There is little doubt that a similar experiment would have the same result in a Britain dominated by the cathode (television) culture.”

A survey conducted by the Audio-Visual Centre of Sydney Teachers’ College (Australia) established the following with regard to the influence of television:

“In the final analysis, it is possible that the media, especially television, have superseded the influence of school, church, perhaps family as the major source of children’s values and ideas.”

(MR. KEVIN TINDALL, DIRECTOR OF THE AUDIO-VISUAL CENTRE)

Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “The eyes and sight are poisonous arrows of Satan”. “Every gaze has attached to it the desire of Satan”.

TELEVISION DIVERTS MAN'S ATTENTION FROM THE REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH

Our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

“Every play (sport or amusement) of the world excepting three (types of play) is BAATIL (baseless, null and not permissible) – (the three types of being) your practicing with your bow and arrow; your training your horse and your playing with your family.”

(NARRATED BY HAKIM IN MUSTADRAK, the Hadith is SAHIH (AUTHENTIC) in terms of the conditions of Imam Muslim_)

Allah ta'ala says in the holy Quran:

“The life of this world is but play and amusement, And, the abode of the Hereafter is best for those who fear (Allah).”

.....

The above stated Hadith and verse of the Holy Quran, as well as many other verses of the Quran and Ahadith make it clear that Islam does not tolerate futility, idle sport and amusement. This is so because amusement and entertainment diverts one's attention from the Remembrance of Allah Ta'ala. Amusement and entertainment which Islam describes as LAHW, LA'B make a person indolent, negligent and irresponsible. Hence, we find Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) condemning very strongly even such play as chess and backgammon, etc. Said the Holy messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

“Whosoever plays with chess and backgammon has dipped his hands in the blood of a swine.”

On the basis of this Hadith as well as other Ahadith and the general spirit of Islam as regards futility and amusement, the Fuqaha state:

“It is forbidden to play chess, backgammon; the indulgence in every amusement (or play) is forbidden because this is futile and idleness. And, this (futility) is haraam (prohibited). The messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

‘The play of a Mu min (believer) is Baatil (Baseless, null and not permissible), but on three occasions -his training his horse: his practicing with his cross-bow, and his playing with his family.’

“And, because it (chess) is a kind of play which diverts one’s attention from Zikrullah (Remembrance of Allah), from attendance of Jamaat Salaah. Therefore, it is Haraam. (Also) because Rasulullah (ﷺ) said:

‘Whatever diverts your attention from Zikrullah is gambling.’

“Imam Abu Yusuf (Rahmatullah alayh) and Imam Muhammed (Rahmatullah alayh) maintain that it is not permissible to offer salutations (to say Assalamu Alaykum) to people indulging in chess games. This is, so as to act as a warning to them.” (HIDAYAH, as well as other fiqh books)

The aforementioned quotations will suffice to show that amusement and entertainments are prohibited in Islam. The reasons for their prohibitions can briefly summed up as follows:

1. It is futility and idleness which our Nabi (ﷺ) forbade.
2. It diverts ones attention from the remembrance of Allah and, Remembrance of Allah is in fact the PURPOSE for which Allah Ta’ala has created man.
3. It interferes with ones Ibaadat causing neglect of Salaah and Jamaat attendance.
4. It causes one to become neglectful to ones social duties.

The Islamic ban on entertainment and amusement applies to all forms and practices which contain the above mentioned elements. In fact, the following statement of our Nabi (ﷺ) covers all types of diversionary play and amusement:

“THE PLAY OF A BELIEVER IS BAATIL.”

“THE PLAY OF THE WORLD IS BAATIL, excepting three types of play ... (Hadith already quoted above).”

Besides the four abovementioned factors (futility, diversion from attention from Zikrullah, Interference with Ibaadat and negligence in one’s social duties) several other outright evil elements (as already explained) exist in television. Research has established the “Divisionary” influence of television. The addictive grip with TV exercises on its viewers are such that it very effectively diverts the attention from the remembrance of Allah and from things of importance. When Islam has forbidden games such as chess because of the existence of two or three harmful factors, it is conceivable that television with a host of evil and harmful elements could be permissible

Research on television has shown ...

Research studies on the effects and influence of television on society has shown:

That the average American child stares at more than 11000 murders by the age of 14.

That most American children spend more time before a set than with their teacher in one year

That violence on television can make addictive young watchers into aggressive sadist.

That television has become the biggest leisure influence in many nations, with millions glued to the screen every evening.

That three-quarters of homes in one British Midlands industrial area were found to have the television on the entire evening everyday.

That in a national survey many young viewers claimed to watch television for up to 46 hours a week.

That viewers, if deprived of television become depressed, short-tempered, nervous and unhappy.

That television has changed and is still changing British life physically, culturally and socially.

That TV devours old attitudes, values and assumptions and leaves in their place an illusory euphoria.

That people become more addictive to TV in middle age.

That television takes one away from reality

That TV has created a "vast tribe of mini-stars, pop-idols, schmaltzy gurus, talking-heads, telegogues and cardboard "personalities" whose only achievement is to be on the box.

That TV causes lethargy in children.

That television is responsible for the falling standard of literacy.

That millions of dollars are spent by advertising to "brainwash" children by means of television to increase demand for consumer goods.

That 90 percent of university students who are addicted to TV are immature, their level of communication being at the sixth grade level.

That TV has more influence on students than their parents, teachers or clergy.

That television destroys social action.

That television encourages an acceptance of aggression as a mode of behavior.

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That television stimulates impressionable and disturbed individuals into attempting to duplicate the crime shown on the screen.

That television makes viewers insensitive to violence perpetrated by others.

That public apathy and failure to respond to a victim's cries for help is blamed on television.

That television encourages perfectly normal children to imitate anti-social behavior they see on the screen

That television, in showing criminal acts is actually teaching, and viewers are actually learning these crimes.

That television advertising gets people to accept nonsense and leads them towards fantasy.

That television encourages people to a system of belief that relies heavily on the concept of magic.

That television is the enemy of traditional standards.

That television is detrimental to the physical and mental health of children.

That television is detrimental to the scholastic work of students.

That television is responsible to a large extent for the violence and delinquency prevalent in the western world.

That violence filmed in such surroundings which are familiar to young television viewers and shown in newsreels are bad for children.

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT TELEVISION

"United states research shows that violence on television can make addictive young watchers into aggressors and even sadists."

(EASTERN PROVINCE HERALD, 23RD OCT., 1975)

"The church of England General Synod, in a report to a government appointed committee deplores scenes of heavy drinking, chain smoking and casual use of obscene language and blasphemous language on TV."

(EASTERN PROVINCE HERALD, 23RD OCT., 1975)

The psychiatrists, Dr. William Tompkins of the George Washington school of medicine, and Dr. Paul Fink of the East Virginia Medical School, have been engaged in intensive research into the effect on people of television advertising. They say that TV commercials "encourage belief in mysticism by making viewers believe they can get what they want almost by magic".

Dr. Tompkins says:

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“Television gets us to accept nonsense and leads us to go looking for a fantasy world”

Los Angeles judge, Mark Brandler, recently blasted a TV show as the cause of a “seven hour nightmare” in which two teenagers taped shotguns to the heads of hostages and extracted a huge sum as ransom from a Californian bank.

“The effect of TV on victim, if not perpetrator, has now been investigated by quit a number of psychiatrists, sociologist and behavioural scientist, and the consensus of opinion is perhaps best summed up in the warning by Dr. Robert Liebert, a child psychologist who was a leading researcher in the United States surgeon General’s investigation into TV and social behaviour: violence on home screens encourages ‘an acceptance of aggression as a mode of behaviour’.”

“...the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) was ticked off by the house and Senate Appropriation committee and told to report on fresh measures to curb video violence or face ‘punitive action’.”

FCC chairman, Richard Wiley approached the network chiefs and persuaded them to get to work on some specific plans to “protect children excessive violence and obscenity”.

Dr. Liebert says: “Perfectly normal children will imitate anti-social behaviour they see on the television, not out of malice, but curiosity.” In displays of violent and criminal acts, the media is “teaching”, and people are “learning”, he says.

“But the TV crime wave goes on, and Americas crime rate continues to soar.”
(EATEARN PROVINCE HERALD, 5TH March, 1957)

“When television comes to south Africa it would kill most social action, as it had in other countries, Professor Jan Beer-man, Professor of public administration at the university of Cape Town, said.” (EVENING POST)

Professor Lowell Little, an eminent American educationist says: “There was no mistaking the malign influence of ‘idiot’ television.” Mr. Tindall, Director of the Audio-Visual center of Sydney Teachers’ college said: “children were learning that violence is not only rampant but frequently justified.”

“For years, people had being saying the good thing about the TV was that it brought news to the living room. But the survey indicated that few children, if given the option, watched the news or current affairs

“An almost unbelievable avalanche of sex, perversion, pornography, blue films, sadism, masochism, bestiality, murder, rape and brutality has flooded into the public view through the modern ‘boob tube’ of television, or the movies and lurid novels.” “In British television almost unbelievable references to lewdness, perverted sex and depravity are as open and unabashed as news reports.”

(TOMORROWS WORLD, August,1971)

CONCLUSION

It has now been seen that in the institution of television there exist a host of evil and un-Islamic factors, viz.,

1. Pictures (of animate objects) and picture-making.
2. Music.
3. Immorality – nudity, illicit-sex, pornography, etc.
4. Obscene language.
5. Agent of Zina (fornication).
6. Negations of Hayaa (or shame and modesty).
7. Scenes of violence, sadism and crime in general portrayed.
8. Addictive influence exercised by TV.
9. Encourages acceptance of aggression as mode of behaviour.
10. Encourages imitations of crimes portrayed.
11. Brian washing action of TV-especially on the young.
12. TV stunts intellectual growth.
13. Wasting of time.
14. Interferes with ones religious duties.
15. Interferes with ones necessary and important worldly duties.
16. Diverts ones attention from the remembrance of Allah.
17. Falls under the category described by Islam as LAHW (لَهْو)

In the face of this formidable array of evil factors and harmful effects no one can have any doubt about the illegality of television in Islam. Television, as has been seen, is an embodiment of sin and immorality. Islam can never condone or permit an institution which plays havoc with the spiritual, mental and moral development of mankind. The consequences of television are most disastrous for the well being of man. Television, in fact, subdues and subverts the entire nation morally, culturally and spiritually. The moral fiber of a nation is destroyed by the evil effect of TV. A nation of TV lovers become obsessed with immorality and crime.

The spiritual development of man is uppermost in the Islamic conception of mans life on earth. Islam categorically states that Allah Ta-ala has created man only for the purpose of worshipping and obeying HIM. All other facets and aspects of life are to be made subservient to this prime purpose of mans life, viz., obedience unto Allah Ta-ala. Man's social life, political life, economic life are all to be subjected, governed and controlled so as to foster the spiritual progress of man. Any practice or institution harmful to the spiritual well-being of man; any agent which interferes with the full realization of the purpose for which Allah Ta-ala has created man, can never be tolerated by the benevolent law of Allah. Precisely for this reason, viz., safeguarding man against destructive elements, has Islam banned all types of futility, entertainment and games which divert man's attention from the remembrance of Allah.

Hazrat Ali ibn Talib (Radiallahu anhu) once passed by a group of people playing the game of chess. He then said: 'What are these idols which you are worshipping?'

"A similar Hadith has also been narrated from ibn Umar (Radiallahu anhu) that when He passed by some people playing the game of chess, he compared their practice (of playing chess) with the worship of idols."

Our Nabi (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

"every play of the world is baatil (null and not permissible), but three types of play (are not baatil); your practicing with your cross-bow; your training your horse; and your playing with your family."

"i.e. That which diverts the attention from things which are of benefit, such as stories which have no true basis, amusements and futile talk."

(TAFSEERUL MAZHARI)

Although the reason for the revelation of these Ayaat was specific, i.e. they were revealed to forbid music, singing and novels, they have a general application in so far as the guidance of man is concerned, hence, Allah Ta-ala uses a general term, viz. LAHWAL HADEETH (لهو الحديث). If the purpose of the verse was to forbid only music or novels, then it would have been revealed with specific terms indicating what actually is prohibited – in this case music and novels. However it is the intention of Allah Ta-ala to save his servants

from all such practices which will have the same effect as music, singing and novels on his servants. Precisely for this reason are the terms LAHWAL HADEETH (لهو الحديث) are used . And the term LAHW (لهو) in Arabic means all such things which divert the mind of man- and, in the case of Muslims, divert the mind of the believer from the remembrance of Allah Ta-ala. The warning of a dreadful punishment sounded in these verses of the Holy Quran applies to, not only music and novels, but to all such practices and things which constitute LAHW (لهو)—futility, nonsense, and diverting from the remembrance of Allah. Now, if the terrible punishment is for only the single crime of music or novels, then the warning of the verse shall apply to a much greater extent to an institution which is conglomeration of many evils. Thus, television, on the basis of principles of fiqh (Islamic law)-the shariah- is aptly covered by the above mentioned verses of the Holy Quran, by the Hadith of our Nabi (صلى الله عليه وسلم) mentioned herein as well as by many other Ahaadith and verses of the Quran.

For all the reasons stated in this article, television can never be passed as lawful (ja-iz) on the basis of the shariah. The evils are too many, the harmful effects are disastrous, and the immorality gorged out by television is ruinous to the moral structure of mankind. Islam can, therefore have no truck with such a destructive institution as television.

Muslims have a sacred duty and obligation unto Allah Ta-ala, and a scared responsibility to their children, viz. to abstain from the evil of television so as to gain the pleasure of Allah; to be saved from the chastisement of the hereafter; and, to protect their children from it.

In another Hadith our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

لهو المؤمن باطل

“The play of a believer is Baatil..”

The playing of chess is not accompanied by so many evils as are attendant to television, yet Allah Ta’ala has declared it (chess) banned in Islam, Said our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم :

من لعب بالشطرنج و النرد فكا نما غمس يده في دم خنزير

“Whoever plays chess has soiled his hands in the blood of a swine.”

It is very simple for a Believer to understand what the attitude of Islam is with regard to television with its fanfare of immorality when the attitude of

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Islam to games such as chess and amusement, singing, music, etc., is of uncompromising prohibition.

In The Holy Quran, Allah Ta'ala says.

“And amongst men, are those who purchase idle-foes without any knowledge; So that they may mislead (men) from the Path of Allah; And, they make a mockery of the Laws (of Allah); They are the ones for whom there is a disgraceful punishment; and, when our Laws are rehearsed to them, they turn away in pride as if they did not hear them; As if there are plugs in their ears; Give them the news of dreadful punishment.”

(QURAN, SURAH LUQMAAN)

The commentators (Mufasssireen) of the Quran and the Fuqaha (Jurists) say that this verse specifically revealed to declare as unlawful music, singing and novels (romances) which divert man's attention from Allah Ta'ala. The Mufasssireen define the terms: “Idle-foes” **لهو الحديث** which appear in these verses as follows:

Moral and spiritual destruction which ensues in the wake of television.

Allah Ta'ala, in stating some of the noble qualities of the Believers, says in the Quran:

“And, when they hear LAGHW (futility and nonsense) they turn away from it, and, they say: For us, our deeds, and for you, your deeds: Peace be upon you: We do not follow the ignorant ones.”

And, Allah Ta'ala says about the Believers:

“And, when they pass (by chance), upon laghw (futility and sin) they pass by it in noble dignity (i.e. they do not indulge in it).”

May Allah Ta'ala, in His Infinite Mercy, protect us all from the evil of television, Ameen.

والله اعلم

Says the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم :

Hazrat Jaber (Radiallahu anhu) reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said in the Farewell Pilgrimage: And I have left among you a thing which if you adhere to, you will never be misguided after this – the Book of Allah Ta'ala and what you get from me by question

(Hadith) –Muslim

Hazrat Abu Rafe' reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: Never do I (wish to) see any of you reclining on his couch, and (whenever) an injunction out of my instructions concerning that which I have enjoined him or prohibited comes to him, he says: I don't know. What we have found in the Book of Allah, we have followed.¹

AHMED, IBN MAJAH, TIRMIZI, ABU DAUD.

THE PICTURES OF TELEVISION

The Holy Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"The Everest punishment on the day of Qiyaamah will be for the picture-makers."

Without any doubt, the Consensus of Islamic legal opinion is that pictures of living objects are Haraam (unlawful-forbidden). Not a single Islamic Law Book or a single Jurist of Islam has given a contrary opinion. It is only some of the "learned" ones of the 20th century who have and are endeavouring to abrogate the Law of Allah by despicably attempting to legalize pictures of animate objects. The Law of Allah on pictures of human beings or animals is FINAL and IRREVOCABLE. Pictures are condemned and outlawed by the Shariah.

Television is a medium whose very "life" and existence is dependent on pictures and the institution of picture-production. Without pictures there is no television. The very term television means:

"The electrical transmission of pictures in motion..."

Islam forbids all uses and so-called benefits derived from pictures. Thus

- i. The making of pictures
- ii. The keeping of pictures
- iii. Entering house where in there are pictures displayed
- iv. Looking and gazing at pictures with desire or satisfaction are all forbidden in Islam.

A person who keeps a picture or a photo of an animate object is guilty of transgressing one or two of the abovementioned Islamic prohibitions

¹Such men as described above will appear in latter days and will be heard to say that obedience to the Quran only would be sufficient for salvation; and Hadith would be kept in the background. But the fools do not understand that the Quran also was recited by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم just as he did with Hadith is commentary of the Quran and it's supplementary. Who can have a greater knowledge of interpreting the Quran than the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself through whose mouth the Quran came as a revelation from Allah.

associated with pictures, for he may keep a picture without displaying it and looking at it occasionally. But, one who purchases a television set and enjoys its programmes is guilty of breaching all the Islamic prohibitions set out above. Let us deal with each factor individually.

MAKING OF PICTURES

The first and foremost warning of Islam against pictures is directed at the picture-makers. Our Holy Nabi Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

كل مصور فى النار

“Every picture-maker will be in the Fire.”

الشد الناس عذابا يوم القيمة المصورون

“The severest punishment on the Day of Qiyaamah will be for the picture-makers.”

الشد الناس عذاب يوم القيمة الذين يتظاهون بخلق الله

“The severest punished person on the Day of Qiyaamah will be those who imitated Allah’s aspects of creation.”

(N.B Our Nabi محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم made this statement while destroying a picture)

The television instrument is a medium which not only displays, but actually produces pictures. By switching on your TV set you are actually assisting in picture-production, thus qualifying to be branded as the evil ones mentioned in the Ahadith of our Nabi محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم pertaining to picture-prohibition. The TV Times and Colour Magazine of the Sunday Times describes the way in which TV produces pictures as follows:

“Let us start with the TV camera. Your experience with cameras is probably limited to the one you have at home, which records the photographic image on a film negative which after chemical treatment, is used to print a permanent picture on photographic paper.

“There is no known way of sending a whole picture through the air in one piece. It has to be sent bit by bit by electric impulses. The best analogy for me to use is the black and white picture in a newspaper.

“... The TV camera follows the same principle. It sends out electric impulses which are picked up by the picture tube in your set.

“... More than a million dots are needed to cover your screen, and the process of scanning the 25 lines is repeated 25 times every second. So

you get the impression of receiving a complete, moving picture instead of one that in fact builds itself down the face of your screen.”

The Encyclopedia Britannica explains:

“The eye is unaware that the picture is being reassembled piece-meal, and the viewing screen appears as if its whole surface were continuously illuminated.”

“By the same token, it is then possible to re-create more than ten complete pictures per second and to simulate thereby the motion of the scene so that it appears to be continuous.

“In practice, to depict rapid movement smoothly, it is customary to transmit from 25 to 30 complete pictures per second.”

“Actually, the screen possesses nearly 1 000 000 holes in an area of 1.5 sq’ in. compared with roughly 200 000 picture elements into which the images is dissected.”

The above description of the method in which TV makes picture shows that you who indulge in TV are guilty of Kabirah sin (great sin) of producing pictures for which terrible chastisement has been threatened by our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم.

KEEPING OF PICTURES

Islam has likewise forbidden the keeping of pictures of animate objects, Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

لَا تَدْخُلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ بَيْتَافِيهِ كَلْبٌ أَوْ تَصَاوِيرٌ

“The Angels (of Mercy) do not enter a house wherein there are pictures or a dog.”

عن عائشة قدم صلى الله عليه وسلم وقد سترت بقرام على سهوة لى فيه تصاوير فنزع وقال اشد الناس عذابا يوم القيمة الذين يضاھون بحلق الله

“Aishah (radiallahu anha) narrates: ‘The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم returned from a journey and I had screened (the entrance) with a curtain on which were pictures. Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم ripped it (the curtain) off and said: The severest punished people on the Day of Qiyaamah will be those who imitate Allah’s aspects of creation (i.e. life)”

Another reason for the prohibition of keeping pictures is the factor of Tashabbuh bil Kuffaar تشبه بالكفار or imitating the unbelievers. Picture-making and keeping of pictures is primarily the past-time and ‘art’ occupation of the Kuffaar. Hazrat Mufti Mohammed Shaafi’, Grand Mufti of Pakistan says:

“One of the factors for the prohibition of pictures is Tashabbuh bil Kuffaar
تشبيه بالكفار”

Angels of Mercy do not enter your home when your TV set is portraying the pictures of animate objects. Our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم commanded that pictures be destroyed, but the lover of television acts in direct contradiction to the command of Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم by bringing into existence pictures by way of the institution of TV. Ponder over the following Hadith:

“Aishah (radiallahu anha) said that she had purchased a carpet which had pictures on it. When the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم saw it he remained outside (the house) and did not enter. she said: ‘I perceived signs of disgust on his face’. She then said: ‘O Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم what is the sin which I have committed?’ Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم replied: ‘What is this carpet?’ Aisha (Radiallahu anha) said: ‘I bought it for you so that you might sit on it and recline.’ Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: ‘The owners of these pictures will be punished and they will be commanded to give life to what they tried to create’ He then said: ‘Angels do not enter the house in which there is a picture.’”

In another Hadith our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم said that Prophets of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم do not enter houses wherein there are pictures. The Fuqaha (Jurists of Islam) say on the basis of these Ahaadith that it is not permissible for a Muslim to enter a house in which pictures of living beings are displayed.

So, when you switch on your television set then remember that you are guilty of the Kabira (great) sin of keeping and displaying pictures in your home. Your home is therefore deprived of Allah’s Rahmat (Mercy); the Angels of Mercy do not enter your home; the Shayaateen (satans) enter your home and Allah Ta’ala’s Wrath and our Nabi’s displeasure settles with you. In maintaining the TV pictures on your TV screen you are just as guilty as the one who decorates his walls the television screen are also STILL PICTURES like all other pictures or photos. The motion you see on your TV screen is illusory and false. The “motion” depicted on the screen is simulated by the rapid transmission of a large number of STILL pictures.

The Encyclopedia Britannica states:

“...By the same token, it is then possible to re-create more than ten complete pictures per second and to simulate thereby the motion of the scene so that it appears to be continuous.

“In practice, to depict rapid movement smoothly, it is customary to transmit from 25 to 30 complete pictures per second.”

The Encyclopedia International states:

“The illusion of motion in television is produced by showing 30 STILL PICTURES, or frames, each second. Through persistence of vision the brain retains each picture until the next comes along. We are not aware of the fact that our eyes are really seeing a rapidly changing sequence of a large number of slightly different still pictures.”

ENTERING HOMES WHEREIN PICTURES ARE DISPLAYED

The abhorrence of Islam for pictures of living things is so great that even entry into houses where in pictures are displayed is not permissible. The Angels of Mercy do not enter such houses. Said the Holy Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم :

لا تدخل الملائكة بيتا فيه كلب أو لاصورة

“The Angels (of Mercy) do not enter homes wherein there is a dog or a picture”

Prophets of Allah do not enter homes wherein there are pictures displayed. The following incident in this regard is related by the noble wife of Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم, Aisha (Radiallahu anha):

عن عائشة انها اشترت نمرقة فيها تصاوير فلما راها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قام على الباب فلم يدخل فعرفت في وجهه الكراهة فقالت يا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم اتوب الى الله و الى رسوله فما ذا اذنبت فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما بال هذه النمرقة قالت اشتريتها لك تقعد عليها وتوسدها فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ان اصحاب هذه الصور يعذبون ويقال لهم احيوا ما خلقتم ثم قال ان البيت الذي فيه الصور لا تدخله الملائكة

“She had purchased a cushion decorated with pictures. When Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم saw it, he remained outside at the entrance, and did not enter. She perceived disgust on his face, hence she said: ‘O Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم – I repent unto Allah and His Messenger, What sin have I committed?’ Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم replied: ‘What is the cushion for?’ She said: ‘I bought it for you to sit on and recline’. Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: ‘Verily, the owners of these pictures will be punished, and it will be said to them; Give life to that which you tried to create’. Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم

added: 'Verily, the home which has pictures in it is not visited by Angels'."

Imam Nawawi (Radiallahu anhu) states in SHARHUL MUSLIM that Imam Zuhri (Radiallahu anhu) said:

"It is not permissible to use an object with pictures on it nor is it permissible to enter a house wherein there are pictures."

Sheikh Mustafaa Hammamu (Radiallahu anhu) of Egypt writes:

"I take oath by Allah and say that the view expounded by Imam Zuhri (Rahmatullah alayh) appeals to me greatly. By the Grace of Allah, I have investigated (this question) and hold the opinion held by Imam Zuhri (Rahmatullah alayh), because when pictures have been totally forbidden, then reason demands that every use derived from pictures be Haraam, otherwise it will be tantamount to rendering aid to the practice of pictures, and, aiding and abetting what is unlawful is likewise Haraam.

"When the Angels do not enter a building in which there are pictures and when Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم is angered to such an extent by the presence of pictures that he refuses to enter the house, then it is quite obvious that a Muslim who follows the Angels and obeys Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم cannot enter a house wherein there are pictures. Now you (O reader) decide for yourself what the result will be of those whose homes and walls are decorated with pictures."

(BAYYINAAT)

Now when you switch on your TV set then remember that you are guilty of the sinful act of displaying pictures in your home. So when the TV is playing in your home it is not permissible for Muslims to enter your home. The Angels do not enter such a home and Rasulallah did not enter and chose to remain outside in disgust. In playing your TV set your guilty of aiding and abetting a naked act of Haraam. And, Allah Ta'ala commands in the Holy Quran:

"And, do not assist each other in sin and transgression"

LOOKING AT PICTURES OF ANIMATE OBJECTS

The Shariah of Islam has declared pictures of animate objects totally Haraam (unlawful-forbidden), hence it is not permissible to derive any type of benefit or use from pictures. The prime purpose of a picture is to look and to gaze at it thus deriving mental satisfaction and pleasure. A picture is of no use to a blind person. He cannot admire or criticize it. Since a picture is produced to be admired, to be looked at, to be gazed at, LOOKING with admiration or looking with satisfaction at it will constitute the fulfillment of the actual and prime purpose of picture-making. A picture is meant to be looked at and admired. Thus in fulfilling the purpose of pictures which are Haraam we are aiding this Haraam practice of pictures, and in so doing we are transgressing. Allah Ta'ala Command in the Quran:

“And, do not aid (each other) in sin and transgression.”

The Shariah ordains:

“To derive pleasure (or satisfaction) by looking at haraam objects Haraam.”

Mufti Mohammed Shafi', Grand Mufti of Pakistan, states:

“Even though nothing evil is associated with the picture, even if it (looking) is merely for the purpose of amusement or satisfaction and pleasure by looking at things which the Shariah has forbidden is also Haraam.”

The following is recorded in the authoritative Book of Islamic Law, Durrul Mukhtaar:

وحرّم الانتفاع بها (ای بالخمر) ولو لسقى دواب او لطین او نظر لتلهی

“The acquisition of benefit (or use) from alcohol is Haraam even though (the benefit or use) may be giving it to animals to drink or “watering” the soil or looking at it (alcohol) to gain pleasure (or satisfaction)”

It was stated earlier that even if no evil factor is associated with the picture, looking at it is not permissible because a picture according to Allah Ta'ala's Law is Haraam and the most important use or benefit of a picture is to look, gaze and admire it. If any un-Islamic element or evil factor is associated with

the picture, e.g. the picture is of a female or a woman whose satar is uncovered or the picture is of a person consuming or advertising alcohol, etc., then the prohibition of looking at such a picture will be stronger.

(N.B. Satar, i.e. that part of the human body the covering of which is compulsory according to the Shariah. The Satar of a man is from the navel to just below the knees. The Satar of a woman is from head to feet.)

Thus, it is not permissible for men to look at women:

عن جابر ابن عبد الله قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن نظر الفجأة فامرني ان اصرف
بصري

“Hazrat Jaabir (Radiallahu anhu) reports: ‘I asked Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم about the gaze which falls suddenly (and unintentionally on a woman), and he (Rasulullah) ordered me to divert my gaze (from the woman on which the gaze fell suddenly).”

Allah Ta’ala says in the Holy Quran:

*“Say (O Muhammad) unto the Believing men:
Cast down your gaze and guard your modesty...
And, say unto the Believing women:
Cast down your gaze and guard your modesty...”*

Like it is not permissible for males to gaze at females, it is not permissible for females to gaze at males. The abovementioned verse of the Holy Quran is explicit in this prohibition. Our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم also ordered women not to gaze at men:

عن ام سلمة انها كانت عند رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ميمونة اذا اقبل ابن مكتوم
فدخل عليه فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم احتجبانمته فقلت يا رسول الله اليس هو اعمى
لا يبصرنا فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم افعمياوان انتما السمتا تبصرانه

“Ummi Salmah (Radiallahu anha) reports that she and Maimunah (Radiallahu anha) were with Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم when Ibn Ummi Maktoom (who was a blind Sahabi) came to Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم. Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم ordered them (i.e. his wives): ‘Seclude yourselves from him (the blind Sahabi)!’ I said: ‘O Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم. But he is blind, he cannot see us.’ Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم replied: ‘Are both of you blind as well? Can you not see him?’”

عن علي كان عند النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال اي شئ خير المرأة فسكتوا قال فلما رجعت قلت لفاطمة اي شئ خير للنساء قالت لايرين الرجال ولايرويهن فذكرت ذلك للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال فاطمة يضعه مني

“Ali (Radiallahu anhu) narrated that he was once with Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم. When he (Rasulullah) asked: ‘What is best for women?’ They (the Sahabah) remained silent (i.e. no one answered). Ali said: ‘When I returned (home) I asked Fatimah (Radiallahu anha): ‘What is best for women?’, and she replied: They should not look at men nor should men look at them (women). I, then narrated this to Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم who replied: Fatimah is a part of me (i.e. she said what I wanted to say – she understood it well).”

There are many other Ahadith of our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم on the same subject, i.e. forbidding the sexes gazing at one another. Leave alone gazing at women, our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم, forbade males looking at even the thighs of men:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يا علي الفخذ عورة لا تبذو فخذك ولا تنظروا الى فخذ حيي ولا ميت

“Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: ‘O Ali! Verily, the thigh is an object of concealment (satar). Never reveal your thigh, nor look at the thigh of a living or a dead person.”

And, leave alone looking at the satar of men or women, the Shariah ordains that it is not permissible to look at even the clothing of women if this stirs up passion in a man.

ان رواية الثوب بحيث يصف حجم العضو ممنوعة ولو كثيفا لا ترى البشرة منه (الدر المختار)

“Verily, looking at clothes (of females) with lust is forbidden even though the clothing be such that the body cannot be seen through it.”

It will be seen that “looking with lust” is a crime in Islam. Now, wherever this element **علت** is present, the ruling of prohibition **حرم** will apply. Whether looking at a woman or at the picture of a woman, the ruling of prohibition will apply because the element of lust exists in both cases. The Fuqaha have clarified this point for us:

وفيه فى بحث النظر الى الاجنبيه من المرأة او الماء بخلاف النظر لانه انما منع منه حيثيه الفتنة والشهود وذلك موجود ههنا – (الدر المختار)

“... this (the prohibition of looking with lust) is contained in the chapter of ‘looking at a female via a mirror or water (i.e. looking at her reflection in the mirror or in water)... looking (at females) is forbidden because of the presence of the lust, and that (element of lust) exist here’ (i.e. looking at a woman or at her reflection in a mirror).”

Mufti Mohammed Shafi’, Grand Mufti of Pakistan, states:

“And, if the picture is of a female, there will be the added sin of evil-gazing. A picture is a complete report or description of the person it depicts. Leave alone the picture of a female; it is Haraam to look with lust at even the garments of a woman.”

The Shariah has forbidden “looking with desire” at women; it has declared Haraam “looking without even desire or lust” at the Satar of males or females; it has banned “looking at the garments of females with lust”; the Shariah has forbidden “looking with desire” at even alcohol; the Shariah ordains that it is forbidden to look at even the reflection of women in a mirror – therefore it can never be permissible to look at pictures of women, especially the pictures of scantily clad women on TV performing in a “life-like” manner.

You will now be in a position to easily understand that the Shariah has forbidden looking at unlawful things with desire or lust, and every PICTURE ON THE TELEVISION SCREEN IS HARAAM, hence looking with satisfaction, amusement and enjoyment at it is HARAAM. You are committing a Kabirah (great) sin by your constant gazing at the Haraam on your Television screen.

THE FEMALE VOICE

The female voice, according to Islam, is also included in the category of Satar, i.e. it has to be “concealed” and not “revealed”. Since the female voice is an entity not to be displayed or advertised, it is not permissible for males to listen to women singing or even reciting the Holy Quran. Allah Ta’ala , the Creator, is well aware of the lure for men which exists in the female voice,

hence women in Islam are not permitted to raise their voices when speaking; they are not permitted to recite the Quran aloud if men are in the vicinity; they are not permitted to recite aloud during Salaat. When necessity demands that they have to speak to males then their speech should not be attractive, gentle and alluring like the deliberate “lure” put in speech by “trained” women of the Kuffaar. Recognizing the danger of allurements in the female voice, the Holy Quran commands women thus:

“And, do not speak in alluring tones so that he in whose heart there is a disease (of lust) desires.”

The indulgence in soft alluring speech by women is a cause of raising amorous hopes in the listener, as speech of women is an important source of sexual excitation. Van de Velde in his book, IDEAL MARRIAGE, states;

“The tone-colour of a voice, and the intonation of a single word – and it may be a word of no special meaning or association in itself – may excite incredible intensity of desire. The unique and precious significance that a woman’s voice can give to “you” or “thou” can suffice to overwhelm man’s power of endurance and control..”

Islam has, hence, forbidden its women to speak in a soft or “sexually” sweet tone. If anyone is aware of the springs of sex-psychology he will clearly see the justification for Islam’s restriction in this matter.

Islam commands the concealment of the female voice and prohibits its display in public, but television demands the contrary. Great use is made of the female voice on TV to advertise, to allure, to excite lust, and female singing with the accompaniment of music is most popular. Mufti Mohammed Shafi’ says:

“It is categorically Haraam – and it is Haraam without any difference of opinion – to listen on a gramophone to such a voice, the listening to which is Haraam in the real state. For example – singing of women even without music, and singing of men with music.”

Television portrays voices, many of which are unlawful according to Islam, e.g. the female voice, the male voice singing with music. And this portrayal of unlawful voices and sounds is done in no small measure. The importance of television programmes, like the importance of all the mass media of the Kuffaar, hinges on maximum exhibition of the female body and the female voice which have been subverted by the bestial culture of the unbelievers, to

pamper the inordinate sexual desire of men who have no belief of Allah in them – of men who have no fear of Allah left in them.

SERIALS, ROMANCES AND STORIES ON TELEVISION

What is Islam's attitude to fiction, novels and romantic stories?

Allah Ta'ala says in the Quran:

“And among mankind are those who purchase idle tales so as to lead astray (other) from the Path of Allah. And, they make a mockery of the Laws of Allah. To them, there is a disgraceful punishment. And, when our verses are rehearsed to them they turn away in pride as if they did not hear, as if there are plugs in their ears. Give them the news of a painful punishment.”

These verses of the Holy Quran were revealed to prohibit, according to the Mufasssireen and Jurists, music and the stories of romances imported from Persia. Since these things divert man's attention from Zikrullah and transport one into the realm of illusion and imagination the Quran outlaws them. Islam strongly discourages fiction and encourages one to live in reality and not in illusion which has the tendency to make one negligent and forgetful of the prime purpose, of man's creation which is to gain Allah's Pleasure by fixing the gaze on the Akhirah (Hereafter) and not on the TV screen. Islam therefore forbids the wasting of time in listening to idle tales and fiction or false stories.

السهر فى اساطير الاولين والاحاديث الكاذبة والسخوية والضحك فهومكروه (فتاوى عالم گيرى)

“it is forbidden to stay awake at night and spend the time in tales (fiction, false stories, jokes (amusement, entertainment) and laughter (derived by way of amusement).”

(FATAWA ALAMGIRI)

وفى النوازل قراءة شعر الاديب اذا كان فيه الفسق والخمر يكره – (فتاوى عالم گيرى)

It is reported in NAWAAZIL:

‘It is forbidden to recite the verses of a poet if these (verses) deal with evil and alcohol.’

(FATAWA ALAMGIRI)

Allah Ta'ala says in the Quran:

“The Life of the world is but play and amusement. And, the Abode of the hereafter is best for those who fear (Allah).”

It is now quite simple to understand the attitude of Islam towards amusements, serials, romances and downright evil exhibitions of television. Islam cannot permit the squandering of precious time and talent in watching the TV screen vomiting out the filth and immorality of the Kuffaar. Islam does not condone its youth sitting up at night and becoming the victims of the brainwashing effects of the evil sounded and portrayed by TV. Islam and a Muslim can have no association with an instrument such as television which portrays and advertises the very evils banned by the Shariah of Islam

TELEVISION AND TIME

Television undoubtedly dominates the free time or leisure of millions who have become addicted to it. Hours of precious time are daily squandered in the presence of the TV set. This malady of wasting hours daily doing “justice to the TV screen” is so serious that even necessary and important work and activities are neglected, especially when the TV programme or serial clashes with the time when a particular work has to be done. The Eastern Province herald dated 23rd October 1975, states in a report:

“Britons spend more time with television than with radio, books, theatre and newspapers combined.

“The average person watches television nine hours six minutes a week in winter and seven hours 42 minutes in summer – but these estimates seem conservative.

“Three-quarters of homes in one British Midlands industrial area were found to have the ‘telly’ on the entire evening every day and in one national survey many young viewers claimed to watch for up to 46 hours a week.

“When early in 1974 the Government put a 10.30 p.m. curfew on television to save electricity for several weeks the outcries were loud and long.”

A recent survey conducted by the Audio-Visual Centre of Sydney Teachers’ College (Australia) revealed that the average child watched over 21 hours of TV a week. Mr. Tindall, Director of the Centre asked:

ISLAM and Television

“What does TV offer the child in exchange for about 1 100 hours of almost undivided attention each year?”

TIME in Islam is of great importance. So important indeed is Time that Almighty Allah in the Holy Quran takes an Oath by Time, and says:

والعصر – BY THE TOKEN OF TIME.

A Muslim is not permitted to waste time, more so, when the wasting of time is a result of an institution portraying vice and evil, and when the wasting of time on a practice or “past-time” involves interference or neglect with ones duties to Allah and man. The addictive grip of television over its viewers is so powerful that the viewer becomes a helpless victim wasting sacred hours glued to the TV screen, thus neglecting his Salaat, his family duties and his social duties. The student undoubtedly neglects his studies and learning. In a survey, teachers have said that a direct link exists between television and the failing standard literacy, particularly among lethargic children continually sitting up late in front of the ‘goggle box’

‘By the Token of Time! Verily man Is in a state of loss;
But, those who believe and Practice righteous deeds;
And who enjoin the Truth; And, who enjoin Patience.” (Quran)

Allah Ta’ala says in the Holy Quran:

*“And amongst men, are those who purchase idle- tales without any knowledge; So that they may mislead (men) from the Path of Allah;
And, they make a mockery of the Law (of Allah)
They are the ones for whom there is a disgraceful punishment;
And, when our Laws are rehearsed to them, they turn away in pride as if they did not hear them; As if there are plugs in their ears; Give them the news of a dreadful punishment.”*
(SURAH LUQMAAN – AL QURAN)

*“And when they (the Believers) hear what is futile they turn away from it,
And they say, unto us our deeds; And, unto you your deeds, peace upon you.
We do not follow the ignorant ones.”*
(QURAN)

TV IN STRIDE – TERROR OF COPY RAPES

The horror of a TV rape came true for two women. They were attacked only days after the screening of a documentary “Cry Rape” of British TV.

The maniac who broke into their homes at Reading, Berkshire, acted just like the TV rapist.

HE STRUCK BY DAY, threatening his victims with a knife.

HE ROBBED them and stacked his loot in a neat pile ready for a quick getaway.

The police chief leading the hunt for the rapist said: “He may have seen this program. It could have stimulated these attacks”

Now police may ask ITV for a private screening of the film to seek possible new clues.

(SUNDAY TIMES, 8th February, 1976)

Television is here and its biggest fans are children. Overnight they’ve become instant pundits, immediately recognizing personalities who are still just facts to the rest of us.

It’s the kids who grab the TV guide and plot their viewing with military precision; the kids who know every cop and cowboy and exactly why it could not have been the butler who did it.

TV has taken over as the kids’ number one pastime. Toys are left in cupboards, rugby ball lie sadly deflating in garden corners and book mildew in forlorn piles.

Yes books and there’s the rub. Are we going to rear a generation of South Africans which does not know how to read and write?

Will reading become a forgotten art only necessary to decipher the basic English of the TV guide or the secret message flashed on the screen by Agent X who has seconds to read the scrawl before it self-destructs?

Will Shakespeare rot along with Hammond Innes and Gunter Grass?
Will literacy die a lonely death, its death rattle drowned by a soft-drink

ISLAM and Television

jingle? Will writing become a skill practiced badly by all except a specialist few?

The answer seems to be yes, at least if overseas experience is a yardstick for us to measure by.

In America where they have more experience with the effects of television on children than anywhere else, they consider themselves to have reached crisis point. Young Americans can barely read or write. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the writing performance of teenagers appears to be deteriorating at almost an alarming rate

LATEST STUDIES

The NAEP's latest studies show that the essays of 13 and 17 year-olds are far more awkward, incoherent and disorganized than the efforts of those tested in 1969.

In England employers are resigned to receiving job applications written like this actual example: *"In answer to your advertisement I wish to aply for the temptry posision in your controll labortery. I have two A levels Physics and Chemistry..."*

Back in America experts are saying that college goers of today will be unable to write ordinary English with any degree of lucidity or structure when they graduate

Across America the statistics on literacy grow more appalling each year. In March, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare revealed the results of a special study that showed a steady erosion of reading skills among American students since 1965.

To Marchall McLuhan, an expert on communication, the signs were clear a decade ago: "Literary culture is through," he said, summing up the prospective long term impact of television.

The United States, says poet Karl Shapiro, "is in the midst of a literary breakdown." "We have ceased to think with words," observes historian Jacques Barzun. "We have stopped teaching our children that the truth cannot be told apart from the right words."

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The cries of dismay sound even louder in America's halls of commerce, industry and the professions, where writing is the basis for almost all formal business communication. Computer print-outs and the conference call may have altered forever the pace and nature of information exchanged but memos to multinational corporate contracts all depend on the precision and clarity of the written word.

The evidence is massive. At the University of California at Berkely, where students come from the top 12.5 percent of high-school graduates, nearly half of last year's freshmen demonstrated writing skills so poor that they were forced to enroll in remedial courses nicknamed "bonehead English."

At Temple University in Philadelphia, the proportion of freshmen failing an English placement exam has increased by more than 50 percent since 1968.

(SUNDAY TIMES, 1st February, 1976)